

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please REPLACE the paragraph on page 6, lines 8-25 as follows:

The online auction system in Fig. 1 includes an auction manager 100 which receives bids 102, 103 from one or more bidders participating in one or more auctions. A bid is an offer from or on behalf of a bidder, and the bid includes an offered price for the good or service being auctioned. The bid may specify an actual price or an amount relative to some other price, such as a predetermined value greater than a previous bid price. The bids may be received by the auction manager 100 in any of a number of ways, including, but not limited to, any data discernable by the auction manager as a bid, such as a message in any format of any computer communication protocol. To process a bid, the auction server uses an indication of the auction, the bidder and the bid price. A bid from a bidder may itself include any one or more of these pieces of information. Any information that the auction server can infer or derive need not be included in the bid itself. Thus, a bid generally includes an indication of one or more of the auction, the bidder and the bid price. The indication of the bidder may be any data indicative of an identifier, such as a name, address, telephone number, email address, security number, credit card number, or other data that can identify the bidder in the system. Automatically and manually generated bids may be received by the auction manager 100. Automatically generated bids may be received from the (one or more) bid generator generators 114, also referred to herein as proxy bidders, described below.

Please REPLACE the paragraph on page 7, lines 8-25 as follows:

Each bid generator 114 receives data specifying at least part of its bidding behavior. The bidding behavior indicates how the bid generator 114 generates a new bid from a current bid. The data specifying the bidding behavior may, in one embodiment, include a maximum bid ~~price~~ 120 and an increment value 122. The maximum bid ~~price~~ 120 indicates the maximum price which the bidder associated with the proxy bidder is willing to bid for an item. The increment value 122 is the amount by which the bid must exceed a previous bid. The increment value 122 may be defined for all bidders in the auction through the auction server, for example, by an

individual or by the auction server itself. Alternatively, the bidder may specify his own increment value to be used by the corresponding bid generator. Any suitable interface, such as an HTML form, may be used to permit a bidder to specify the bidding behavior of the proxy bidder. Using the current bidding status 104, the bid generator generates the bid 102 according to the specified bidding behavior. In general, the bid generator adds the increment value 122 to the bid price of the previous bid to yield the bid price of the new bid. The bid price of the new bid may not exceed the maximum bid 120. If the highest bid price received during the auction exceeds the maximum bid ~~price~~ 120, then no bid is placed and / or the actual bidder is notified in some manner (e.g., using electronic mail) that his maximum bid price has been exceeded.

Please REPLACE the paragraph on page 10, lines 4-19 as follows:

An auction behavior selector 106 may be used to select a desired auction behavior 108. For example, the auction behavior selector may use one or more of the current bidding status 104, current information about the current auction 116, and/or ~~information about past auctions~~ auction information 118. For example, the auction behavior selector may identify a prior auction that is most similar to the current auction, and select the auction behavior of that prior auction as the desired auction behavior. Similarity may be determined by comparing one or more values associated with the auctions, using any suitable similarity or distance metric to obtain a measure of similarity. A measure computed using a similarity metric generally increases with increased similarity of the compared items. A measure computed using a distance metric generally decreases with increased similarity of the compared items. Many kinds of metrics may be used, including Hamming distance, correlation, Euclidean distance and other metrics. The invention is not limited by any particular similarity or distance metric. One or more thresholds may be defined to which this measure may be compared to indicate an extent of similarity. An example implementation of an auction behavior selector 106 is described in more detail below.

Please REPLACE the paragraph on page 10, lines 27-32 as follows:

The auction behavior selector 106, auction manager 100, rule selector ~~generator~~-110 and (one or more) bid generator ~~generators~~-114 all may be present and operating on one or more computers or other devices acting as a server computer for the auction. This server computer, herein called an auction server, may be accessed by one or more computers or other devices used by sellers, and one or more computers or other devices used by bidders in any manner known in the art (e.g., via the Internet).